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SUBJ: LETTER TO CHICOMS ON US PRISONERS

1. FOLLOWING IS A LETTER REGARDING U.S. PRISONERS IN COMCHINA WHICH KREISBERG WILL DELIVER TO THE CHINESE EMBASSY ON DAY AFTER AMBASSADORIAL MEETING. PLEASE HOLD FOR HIS ARRIVAL.

QTE: DEAR MR. AMBASSADOR:

YOUR LETTER OF NOVEMBER 15 STATES AGAIN THAT THE HOLDING OF AMERICAN PRISONERS BY YOUR AUTHORITIES IS AN INTERNAL MATTER AND ONE IN WHICH THE UNITED STATES HAS NO RIGHT TO INTERVENE. IN YOUR LETTER, YOUR GOVERNMENT ALSO REFUSES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON THE WELFARE OR WHEREABOUTS OF AMERICANS CURRENTLY HELD AS PRISONERS OR MISSING AMERICAN SERVICEMEN.

THE QUESTION OF AMERICAN PRISONERS IN CHINA IS ONE OF THE OLDEST OUTSTANDING ISSUES BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS. THE ORIGINAL REASON FOR THE SINO-AMERICAN AMBASSADORIAL TALKS,

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YOU WILL RECALL, WAS PRECISELY TO BRING ABOUT THE RELEASE BY YOUR AUTHORITIES OF AMERICANS HELD WHO WISHED TO RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES. OUR GOVERNMENTS REACHED AN AGREED UNDERSTANDING ON SEPTEMBER 10, 1955, AT WHICH TIME PREMIER CHOU EN-LAI MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE RELEASE OF SUCH AMERICANS, SPECIFICALLY THOSE IN PRISON, WOULD NOT TAKE LONG. THREE AMERICANS: DOWNEY, FECTEAU, AND REDMOND, WERE IN YOUR CUSTODY AT THE TIME OF THE AGREED UNDERSTANDING AND HAVE NOT YET BEEN RELEASED. 13 YEAR IS A LONG TIME. THERE CAN BE NO QUESTION THAT THESE INDIVIDUALS THEN AND NOW WANT TO RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES. IT IS HIGH TIME THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT LIVED UP TO THE SPIRIT AND THE LETTER OF THAT ORIGINAL AGREEMENT AND PERMITTED THEIR EXPEDITIOUS DEPARTURE.

SO FAR AS THE OTHER AMERICANS YOUR GOVERNMENT ACKNOWLEDGES AS BEING IN CUSTODY ARE CONCERNED, BISHIP WALSH, MAJOR SMITH, AND LIEUTENANT FLYNN, ESTABLISHED INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE GIVES US THE RIGHT TO INTERCEDE ON THEIR BEHALF, JUST AS IT EMPOWERED YOU IN THE 1950S TO EXPRESS YOUR INTEREST IN CHINESE IN AMERICAN PRISONS AND HOSPITALS WHO CONSIDERED THEMSELVES CITIZENS OF YOUR COUNTRY. THE ACCEPTED NORMS OF INTERNATIONAL BEHAVIOR, WHICH YOUR GOVERNMENT DOES NOT HESITATE TO CITE, FOR EXAMPLE, IN REFERRING TO THE TREATMENT OF CHINESE IN INDONESIA, PLACE AN OBLIGATION ON YOUR GOVERNMENT AT LEAST TO PROVIDE WHATEVER INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE ON THE WELFARE AND WHEREABOUTS OF SPECIFIC AMERICANS KNOWN OR BELIEVED POSSIBLY TO BE IN YOUR CUSTODY, JUST AS WE HAVE RESPONDED WHEN YOUR GOVERNMENT HAS INQUIRED ABOUT SPECIFIC CHINESE CITIZENS IN U.S. CUSTODY.

WHEN WE HAVE ASKED, AS I ASK AGAIN NOW, WHETHER YOU CAN INFORM US IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION ON THE SURVIVAL OF LT. JOSEPH P. DUNN WHOSE AIRCRAFT WAS SHOT DOWN OFF THE COAST OF HAINAN ON FEBRUARY 14, 1968, THIS IS HARDLY "INTERFERENCE," BUT RATHER A SIMPLE REQUEST FOR INFORMATION. THERE IS NO PLAUSIBLE EXPLANATION FOR YOUR UNWILLINGNESS TO RESPOND TO SUCH A REQUEST. MY GOVERNMENT FIRMLY HOPES THAT YOU WILL PROVIDE US WITH WHATEVER INFORMATION YOU HAVE AS SOON AS IS POSSIBLE.

THE SAME HOPE APPLIES TO ANY NEWS YOU MAY HAVE ON THE WELFARE AND WHEREABOUTS OF ANY OF THE TEN AMERICAN AIRMEN LISTED IN OUR MEMORANDUM OF JANUARY 9, 1968 AND ANY OF THE 389 AMER-

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ICAN SERVICEMEN MISSING AND UNACCOUNTED FOR SINCE THE KOREAN HOSTILITIES.

I WOULD LIKE AT THIS TIME TO INQUIRE AGAIN ABOUT THE HEALTH OF MR. HUGH REDMOND AND ASK WHY HE HAS APPARENTLY NOT BEEN ALLOWED TO WRITE TO HIS FAMILY FOR MORE THAN A YEAR AND A HALF. THE HEALTH OF HIS MOTHER, WHO SUFFERED A PARALYTIC STROKE MORE THAN A YEAR AGO, HAS IN RECENT MONTHS WORSENERED, AND THE ABSENCE OF ANY WORD OR EXPLANATION FOR THE SILENCE OF HER SON SINCE LAST JULY IS A SOURCE OF CONTINUING ANGUISH TO HER. THE AMERICAN RED CROSS SOCIETY HAS REPEATEDLY SOUGHT INFORMATION ON THIS MATTER FROM THE CHINESE RED CROSS BUT HAS RECEIVED NO REPLIES. I URGENTLY REQUEST THAT YOU LOOK INTO THIS MATTER AND EITHER INFORM ME OR THE AMERICAN RED CROSS THROUGH THE CHINESE RED CROSS OF MR. REDMOND'S CONDITION.

INFORMATION ON THE WELFARE AND WHEREABOUTS OF THESE PRISONERS IS IMPORTANT, BUT THEIR RELEASE IS THE CRUX OF THE ISSUE. I URGE THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT FREE THESE MEN AND PERMIT THEM TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMES AND FAMILIES.

AS I MENTIONED YESTERDAY, FORWARD MOVEMENT ON THE PRISONER ISSUE WOULD SIGNAL THE APPROACH OF A MORE CONSTRUCTIVE PHASE IN THE RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. OUR WILLINGNESS TO SEND A SPECIAL AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVE TO PEKING TO DISCUSS THESE ISSUES IN DEPTH IS AN INDICATION OF MY GOVERNMENT'S INTEREST AND CONCERN, NOT ONLY IN HELPING TO RESOLVE THIS OLD AND GALLING QUESTION, BUT ALSO IN ATTEMPTING TO MOVE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS OUT OF THE DEADLOCKED POSITION IT HAS BEEN IN FOR THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS. I WOULD WELCOME A POSITIVE RESPONSE ON THE PART OF YOUR GOVERNMENT. SINCERELY,

WALTER J. STOESSEL, JR. UNOTE
GP-3. ROGERS

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